

Dr. Thomas M. Connelly, Jr.  
Executive Director & CEO  
American Chemistry Society

Dear Dr. Connelly:

Thank you for your letter of July 13, 2016 to EPA Administrator Gina McCarthy and Secretary of Defense Ashton Carter regarding concerns with the open burning of munitions and other toxic wastes at Department of Defense facilities across the United States. We appreciate your interest, and offer of assistance, regarding this important matter.

EPA's Office of Resource Conservation and Recovery currently has a broad effort underway to identify and promote the use of hazardous waste treatment technologies that are cleaner than existing open burn/open detonation treatment activities. Key aspects of this effort include assessing: (1) the environmental and health impacts of open burning and open detonation (OB/OD) and any associated site remediation and cleanup costs; (2) the availability of proven and readily available alternative treatment options for energetic hazardous wastes, including the treatment technology you referred to in your letter that is currently being used at Camp Minden; (3) whether these treatment technologies can be used for all hazardous wastes currently being open burned/open detonated; (4) the possible use of mobile treatment units that could serve as an alternative to OB/OD activities which would significantly reduce emissions to the environment (relative to open burning/open detonation treatment activities); and (5) how best to promote the use of such cleaner technologies either within, or in a revised, regulatory hazardous waste regulatory program framework for explosives waste treatment.

To this end, EPA has been working collaboratively with numerous other federal entities, including the Department of Defense, the Department of Transportation, and the Chemical Safety Board. We are also collaborating with the private sector entities, including the American Pyrotechnics Association, the Institute of Makers of Explosives, and a number of companies with explosives treatment technology capabilities.

A main focus of the above described effort seeks to identify cleaner treatment technologies that may be used to reduce the amount of energetic waste that is open burned/open detonated at DOD facilities. As we continue our efforts, we would like to take you up on your offer to determine if the American Chemical Society can assist us in our efforts to identify and promote the use of cleaner alternative treatment technologies for energetic hazardous wastes.

I have asked Kenneth Shuster of my staff, who has been working on these issues for several years, to contact you about your offer of assistance. In the meantime, if you have any questions feel free to call Kenneth at (703) 308-8759.

Sincerely

Mathy Stanislaus

Assistant Administrator  
Office of Land and Emergency Management